

The following presentation was given as part of a panel recently at a statewide First 5 training event. The topic was “Non–Traditional/Collaborative Grant Making”.

Our “Request for Results” process was highlighted at the conference as an example of non–traditional ways of funding projects and initiatives that also seek to keep the community involved and build new partnerships.

The content for the presentation was taken from the First 5 – Placer 2004–07 Strategic Plan and the May 19, 2004 Request for Results Applicant Workshop.

# *Request for Results Process*

## An Alternative to the RFP

**Open Space Technology** – An alternative to the bidders conference

**Ecology Model** – A way to think about sustainability, partnerships and money

**Inclusive Community Review** – Facilitated community review taps the power of diversity to ensure stability and a focus on results that matter.

# Context

“Business as usual” is just not good enough for our prenatal through 5 children.

Money alone cannot achieve the results that are envisioned by the First 5 movement in Placer County.

Competition needs to be directed toward achieving children and family outcomes – not used as a motivator for agencies to fight against each other to win money.

# More Context

*The California Children and Families Act calls for:*

- *Creation and implementation of an integrated, comprehensive, and collaborative system of information and services.*
- *A system that functions as a network promoting accessibility to all information and services from any entry point into the system.*

- *Emphasis on local decision making, to provide for greater local flexibility in designing delivery systems, and to eliminate duplicative administrative systems.*

- *State and county commissions shall use outcome-based accountability to determine future expenditures.”*

# Request for Results

## 3 Main Points

- Primary focus is on early childhood development. The brain develops most during the first 5 years of life.
- Investments in sustainable results – not just another proposal process to fund annual budgets

- No one organization can achieve comprehensive, sustainable results alone – this requires partnerships, coordination, communication and possibly integrated approaches.

# What we mean by....

- **Sustainability** – What else does it take to accomplish your desired outcomes besides money? What will be left when your First 5 funds diminish or disappear?
- **Partner** – One who has an equal satisfaction, share or part in something with another or others.
- **Outcome** – A condition and/or behavior that will exist or, be enhanced as a result of activities or services funded through First 5.



- **Performance Measure** – Qualitative and/or quantitative data (information) that will help our community understand the degree to which outcomes are being achieved.
- **Evaluation & Learning Conversations** – To acquire knowledge from understanding outcome data and to continuously apply that knowledge to improve services and outcomes. To share learning through diverse feedback loops.

# What are models of sustainability that we can learn from?

- We need to look no further than the biosphere that we all live in to find analogies, metaphors and models to inspire our thinking.
- How about an “ecology model” of investing in sustainable results for our prenatal through 5 population?

# An Ecology Based Model

Sustainable ecologies have five main characteristics:

- **Networks**
- **Partnerships**
- **Dynamic Balance**
- **Diversity**
- **Energy**

# A First 5 Community Ecology

- **Networks** – In nature, all living systems communicate with one another and share resources across their boundaries.

We need to network and share resources across agency and social boundaries.

- Partnerships – Ecosystems are sustained by pervasive cooperation.

Our results will be sustained by partnerships and cooperation among all who serve the prenatal through 5 population – not just those funded by First 5.

- **Dynamic Balance** – An ecosystem is a flexible, ever-fluctuating network resulting from multiple feedback loops that keep the system in a state of dynamic balance.

In First 5, we need balanced and easily modified approaches created by independent actions of many people using dynamic and ever changing strategies and flexible feedback loops.

- **Diversity** – Ecosystems achieve stability, resilience and sustainability through the richness and complexity of their ecological webs. The greater the biodiversity, the more resilient they will be.

In the First 5 community, diversity will ensure stability and promote sustainability.

**Energy** – In an ecosystem, solar energy is transformed into chemical energy, which powers the ecological system.

Just as energy moves through an ecosystem in web-like fashion, to achieve sustainable results, the energy created by First 5 funding must be allowed to flow to the 0–5 population through diverse pathways.



The issues facing children and families are often very complex and require innovative & flexible approaches.

Complex rules promote simple and simplistic behaviors.

Simple rules allow for complex behaviors.

# Keeping it Simple

## The Request for Results Questions

- What opportunity or problem are you addressing?
- What result are you trying to achieve?
- How will you know whether the result is achieved or not?
- What will you do to achieve the result?
- What is the First 5 investment?
- How will the result be sustained?

# Open Space Technology

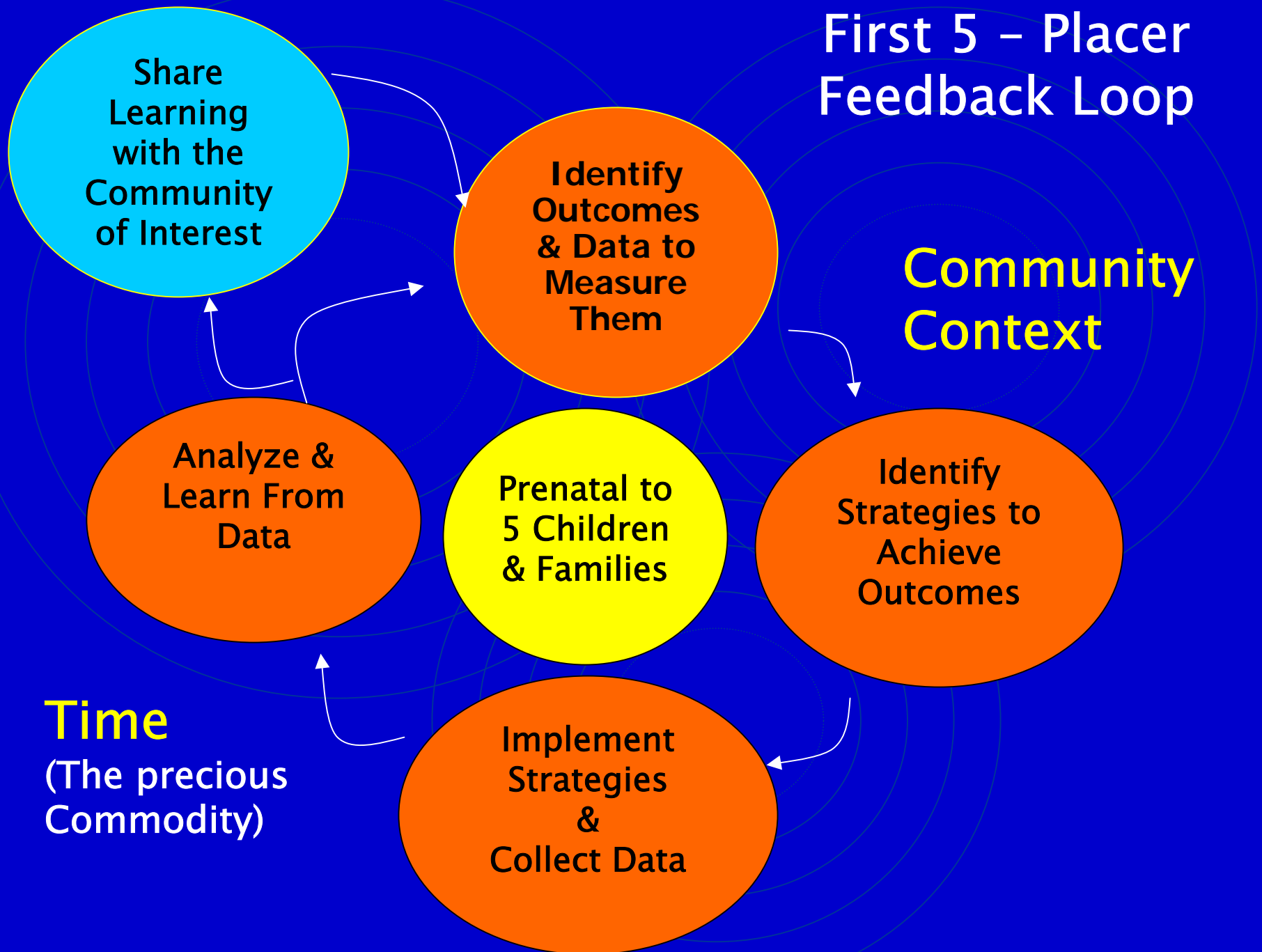
## An Alternative to the Bidders Conference

- The Open Space process engages people in conversations in a highly participative manner. People have opportunities to move between community and a marketplace of ideas. This promotes cross-pollenization of input and self-organized group action.

# Our Applicant Workshop Open Space Theme

*“How will we  
partner to achieve  
sustainable results  
for children  
prenatal through 5  
and their families?”*

# First 5 – Placer Feedback Loop





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